

A NEW LOCALITY RECORD FOR *APATURA IRIS*
LINNAEUS (LEP.: NYMPHALIDAE)
FROM GREECE

By JOHN G. COUTSIS *

In the "Field Guide to the Butterflies of Britain and Europe" (Higgins & Riley, 1980), it is stated that *A. iris* is "absent from much of southern Europe, including peninsular Italy and Balkans". In the distribution map which is included, the distribution area for this species is clearly shown to be well outside the northern borders of Greece.

A. iris, however, was first recorded from Greece by Kattoulas & Koutsaftikis in 1977 (East Rhodopi Mts, 800-1800m). Higgins, apparently, was unaware of this record, but for justifiable reasons, as it was published in the "Annales Musei Goulandris", a publication of rather limited distribution amongst lepidopterists.

This butterfly was also recorded from Greece by Willemse in 1980 (Mt. Smolikas, Ipiros, 1400m), and by van der Poorten in 1981 (Mt. Vitsi, District of Florina, Macedonia).

On 25th July 1983, while collecting at an altitude of 1100m, in the Aspropotamos area, Pindos Mts, District of Trikala, Thessalia, Greece, I had the good fortune to capture two male *iris*, while they were feeding on excrement, and to observe another three specimens flying around the tops of trees. The locality is an artificial opening in a forest of mixed coniferous and deciduous trees, created by a dirt road that runs parallel to a stream flanked by willow trees.

This locality is situated just south of the 40th parallel north and is the southernmost of *iris* both for Greece and Europe.

Records from Italy (Verity, 1950), Spain and Portugal (Manley & Allcard, 1970), whether authentic, or doubtful, all refer to localities that are situated to the north of the Pindos locality.

It seems that the Pindos Mts, which are an extension of the Dinaric Alps, act as a natural passageway for the spreading of central European faunal elements into southern Europe.

References

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*4 Glykonos Street, Athens 139, Greece.

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SCOTS PINE AS A FOODPLANT OF MICROPTERIX THUNBERGELLA F. (LEP.: MICROPTERIGIDAE) MOTHS. — During visits to Gaitbarrows N. N. R. (North Lancashire) on May 16 1981 and June 5 1983, I observed many moths of *M. thunbergella* feeding on the pollen of mature pines round the edge of the limestone pavement. Indeed, it seemed to be the foodplant of choice, as none was seen on any other plant. Pine is not quoted as a foodplant in any of my textbooks and John Heath told me he had no previous record of it on this. Has anyone seen the species on pine elsewhere or is it a purely local preference? — D. W. KYDD, 6 Yewbarrow Road, Ulverston, Cumbria LA12 9JS.

SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF BOTH LARVAE AND ADULTS OF POLYMIXIS FLAVICINCTA D. & S. (LEP.: NOCTUIDAE) IN RESIDENTIAL HOVE. — On the 3rd June 1983 I noticed evidence of considerable larval infestation on the tips of well grown mint (a small bed only three feet square) in our back garden. On inspection I found obvious noctuid larvae unfamiliar to me (each about 55mm in length) and probably in their last instar. I sent one to Mr. Colin Pratt of Peacehaven for identification. His reply was *P. flavicincta* a species regularly recorded over a period of years in coastal Sussex. I sent the remaining three larvae to the British Museum (Nat. Hist.) for record purposes. From the amount of eating on the mint shoots there had evidently been more than four larvae present.

The sequel to the above note occurred on the night of 29th September at 8.30 p.m. when several *P. flavicincta* were attracted to light on the glass of our kitchen door situated about 15 feet from the mint bed! This was followed by two more specimens on the 29th and three further specimens on the 30th. The following nights were probably unfavourable and no more appeared, although I kept watch nightly. On the 11th October I observed a female at rest on the wall immediately adjacent to the mint bed; from then on all activity ceased! I have left the growth of mint as it is, in the hope that in the spring some larvae may hatch out and repeat the pattern of 1983. I have not yet searched for eggs. I have lived at this address since 1963 and have never before seen *P. flavicincta* in Hove, which prompts me to think that there may be a sudden upsurge in this district.

As a boy living in Bedford 1918-1927, this species was common at rest and at light every autumn. I had the good fortune at that time to capture at rest a unique unicolorous buff example, which I presented to the late Mr. W. Rait-Smith from whom it passed on his death to the RCK collection at the British Museum. — R. M. CRASKE, 29 Salisbury Road, Hove, E. Sussex BN33 AE.